A pleasant History Of the Life and Death of *Will Summers.*

And how hee came first to be knowne at the Court, and how he came up to London, and by what meanes hee got to be King *Henry* the eights *Iester.*

With the entertainment that his cozen *Patch*, Cardinall *Wolsey's* foole, gave him at his Lords house, and how the hogs-heads of gold were known by this meanes, and were seized on at his seller in old Fish-street.

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The Life of *Will Summers.*

THe Proverb tells us, *Stultorum plena ſunt omnia*; All places are full of fooles. There is Solomons Fwle, He that deſpiſeth wiſedome and knowledge: there is St. Gregories foole, Who is buſie in other mens matters, and careleſſe and negligent of his owne: there is Democritus his foole, Who onely doateth upon things abſent, and what is preſent, deſpiſeth, though much more commodious and beneficiall than things paſt. Socrates hath his rich foole, whom hee calleth A golden ſlave:

Cicero's foole, who can neither endure things preſent, nor prevent what is to come: There is Dioniſius his foole, who beareth himſelfe arrogantly to the humble, and ſubmiſſively to the proud: There is Pachimerus his foole, who in ſerious things ſports, and in trifles and toyes is ſerious. Ariſtotles foole, who hath not ſence to diſtinguiſh good from bad. There is Crates his foole, who in proſperity is drunke, in adverſity mad. There is Seneca's foole, who alwayes is but beginning to live, and feeds his fancies with new hopes even in the extremity of his age. There is Procopius his foole, that conſidereth not in the beginning what the end may be, but repenteth himſelfe in the middeſt, & ſo of the reſt.

Now as there are divers ſorts of fooles, ſo there are ſundry kinds of folly; as dulneſſe, blockiſhnes, ſtupidity, folly, fatuity, &c. That which we call Stultitia, or fooliſhneſſe,

neſſe, impoꝛts an obtuſeneſſe oꝛ dulneſſe of the ſpirituall ſences: that which we call Fatuity, oꝛ Ideotiſme, implyes a pꝛivation of all: the reſt wee admit as intermediates, and participating of both; there is alſo a ſenceleſſe and bꝛaine-ſick ſtupidity, that hath alliance to the reſt, of which I will give you ſome few hiſtoꝛicall inſtances.

The Thracians were generally held to be ſo blockiſh, that they could not tell to five; and being upon a time refractoꝛy to their Generall, and refuſing to be guided and governed by him, hee cauſed an infinite company of Ladders to be made, at which they wondꝛing, demanded the cauſe thereof, who told them againe, that ſince they were rebellious to his command, he purpoſed to ſet one of thoſe Ladders on the top of another, and faſten them end to end, by which he purpoſed to climbe up to Heaven,

and complaine to Juno of their late disobedience, with which answer being terrified, they wholly submitted themselves, and never after dared to mutine against him.

The Arcadians were also of such stupidity, that as Erasmus in his Proverbs reports, they refused to entertaine any Musick (how sweet soever) into their Citties; in which they also interdicted the profession of all Liberall Arts and Sciences. As absurd things wee read of the Lesbians: The Athenians at the first erecting of their City, the Abderitæ, and others.

Xerxes also, King of the Persians, because he was defeated by the Greekes in a great Sea-battaile, caused the Hellespont to be beaten with many stripes: he sent also an Epistle to the Mountaine Athos, which lifteth up his head into the clouds, to this purpose: Doe not thou oh mighty *Athos*, yeeld me, towards my vast buildings, stones too

great

great and intractable, leſt in my fury I cauſed thee to be digged downe, and precipitate thee into the Ocean. The like imputation of madneſſe, or folly, hath beene put upon the two warlike nations of the Greeks and the Trojans, to ſpend the lives of ſo many brave Kings, Princes, Commanders, and Souldiers, the one in obtaining the other, of one laſcivious and inconſtant proſtitute.

Folly is the poverty of the mind, and amongſt fooles, hee is held to be the greateſt foole, that knoweth little, and would ſeems to underſtand much. A faire and a beautifull perſon, ſaith Diogenes, that is defective in his ſences, is like a gorgeous houſe inhabited with a bad Tenant. The foole wanteth much, and were he poſſeſt of all things, yet did hee not know how to uſe any of them; for the more rich a foole is, the more fooliſh he is. A ſimple or ignorant

rant person may be knowne by three things; he cannot rule himselfe, because he lacketh reason; he cannot resist his passions, because he wanteth wit; neither can hee act that which he would doe, because he is in bondage to folly; for where there is no capacity or apprehension, all perswasion or instruction is in vaine. It is better to be unborne, than unknowing; for want of understanding is the roote of all misfortune; neither is ignorance ever truely knowne to be ignorance, till it be matched with knowledge. *Vnicum est bonum scientia, & malum unicum est ignorantia*: that is, The onely good is knowledge, and the onely evill is ignorance. In adversity it is a blessing, in prosperity a scorne; it hath the boldest face, and cowardliest expression, and is no better than the meere franzy of the minde: but as vessels are knowne by their sound

ſound whether they be whole or broken, ſo men are found by their ſpeech and behaviour, whether they be wiſe or fooliſh: and as the wiſedome of wiſe men continually augmenteth; ſo the ſtupidity of the fooliſh evermore increaſeth. Some be fooles by nature, ſuch as we call meere Naturalls, or Ideots: others be cunning and crafty fooles, who when they cannot thrive by their wiſedome, ſeeke to live by their folly; and ſuch an one, it may be imagined, was this Will Summers, of whom is our preſent Argument: for as ſome things proceeding from him ſavoured of a meere brainleſſe ſtupidity; ſo other things againe expreſſed in him a wary acute and ingenious capacity; ſo that hee might be imagined to be a mixture of two metals, or a compound of foole and knave, in which words I no way taxe his honeſty, but rather intend

in

in it his crafty simplicity.

I shall not neede to stand long to discourse upon his birth breeding, and parents: onely I will deliver unto you some pleasant passages of his in the Countrey, before he came to bee a Courtier: onely he was of a low stature, of a pleasant countenance, and of a nimble body and gesture, and had a good mother-wit in him, as the story hereafter will shew.

Will Summers passing by chance where hee heard a poore Millar begging an almes of a Baker, and desired to give him something for the alliance that was betwixt their two trades: Summers asked the Millar, how many farmers had beene customers to his mill, who answered him, seaven or eight, and that he onely ground all their corne: to whom he replyed againe: Baker it is pitty to give this fellow any thing: for I finde by him hee is more foole than knave

knaue; for if there had beene any wit in him at all, he would haue vndone all these Farmers before himselfe would haue beene forc't thus to goe a begging.

When his mother went to buriall, he following the Hearse, stretcht out his voyce, and sung as loud as he was able, for which his father reproving him, he made answer and said, Father you are the greatest foole of the two; for the Priest and Clerke will not sing for her, unlesse you hire them with mony, and you see I am content to doe it of free-cost.

Comming with a friend or companion of his into a victualing-house, they call'd for egges, which when they had eaten, and satisfied the Hostesse, Will Summers made haste to bee gone, and his partner could not make him stay any longer by any meanes: but being some distance from the house, his friend asked him what was

the

the reaſon he made ſuch ſpeed thence: marry, ſaith he becauſe my Hoſteſſe ſhould not call mee to

queſtion for an after reckoning; for in one of mine egges there was a whole Chicken, and I ſupt it

it off at one mouthfull, and never paid for it.

In their way home it hapned, Will Summers, having his bundle at his backe, and straining himselfe with taking too large a stride, let fly a great scape from behinde, which the other hearing, sayd unto him, now out upon thee for a beastly foole, what hast thou done? who answered him againe, thou must needes excuse me; and further I can assure thee, if my Taile could have borrowed thy tongue to have made use of, it would have beene talking long agoe.

Upon a time being walking in the middle of Summer, and the Sun shining very hot upon him, insomuch that he swet againe, looking up to the Elements, he sayd, now if thou bee'st a God, Sunne take in thy beames, and keepe them in till next Winter, and if you will afford me them then, I shall

shall be much beholding unto thee.
Another time Will Summers and
his Horse having croſt a river in a

Ferry-boate, and being very
fearefull upon the water, he ſpake
never a word till hee had got ſafe
over,

ouer, and then ſitting himſelfe downe upon the farther ſhore, and fetching a great ſigh, he ſayd, now what a blockiſh and ſenceleſſe fole am I, for if I had bæne drown'd in the river, how miſerably would my father have beaten me?

Upon a time being in place where a deboiſt gallant came in, whoſe onely talke was of his Gentry, and from what a noble houſe he was deſcended, Will Summers ſæing him ſo brave in words, and poore in habite, ſaid unto him, what a coyle is heere with talking of Gentry and Nobility? I doe not think but if the truth were known, our Millers horſe is the better gentleman of the two; for you ſhal never ſæ him goe abroad without a man to waite upon him.

Another time a Miller having abuſed him, hee told him, that hee thought there was nothing that he could imagine, was more valiant than the coller of a Millers ſhirt:

who asking him what reason hée had to thinke so: made present answer, marry because every morning it hath a theefe by the neck.

Upon a time being very sicke & weake by reason of a Feaver that had long troubled him, a neighbour comming to give him some wholesome ghostly counsell bad him be of good comfort, and told him, that if he were taken out of this vaine transitory world, hée should bee immediately taken up, and carried up into Paradise: who answered him that he was glad of that with all his heart: for if the way to Paradise were any part of it up the hill, he was never able to travell thither on foot, his legges were so weake and so feeble.

On a time Will Summers wanting money, and having neither money nor credit, knew not what to doe: at length bethinking with himselfe how to get some coyne, it being Summer time, he goes into a hollow

a hollow tree, and there gets a great deale of the powder or dust of the tree, and laps it up in little papers like to Tobacco, and rides unto a Towne where hee was not knowne; and it being a market-day, opened a box which he had before him, wherein were all these papers full of this powder, and there with a loud voice cryes out, buy a Tormentor for Fleas, buy a tormentor of Fleas: the people at that season being much troubled with fleas, bought every one two penny worth, and asked him how they should use it: Thus said hee; strow it on the sheets before you goe to bed, and I will warrant you, it will torment and kill them all. So in a short space Will Summers had sold all, and had got store of money, and went away merrily to his fathers house. So the next market-day following, he wanting more money, went againe with more of the same powder, and

tooke money enough; and some of those which had formerly bought the powder of him, told him that it did no good, but rather disturbed them of their sleeps, nor did it kill the Fleas: Then sayd Will Summers, you did not as I told you; yes indeed, we did strow it in the bed: Ey but said Will Summers, you should have had a little sticke in one hand, and with the other hand have caught them by the nap of the necke, and so have thrust it downe their throats, and that will so torment them, that they will never trouble you againe. So they bought more of the same powder, and went home, and thanked him heartily, without any suspicion of his knavery and deceit therein.

Above all things, Will Summers could not endure the lye, and if any man told him that hee ly'd, he would be sure to strike him with the

the next thing that came into his hand. It so happened, that hee telling a Tale according to his fashion, one that stood by, and heard him, sayd unto him, Nay that (William) I hold to bee an arrant lye, at which he growing to a pelting chafe, snatcht up a good cudgell, and came towards him, holding it over his head, and asked him why hee gave him the lye: the other knowing his suddennesse, and that he was but a word and a blow, deny'd his words, and sayd, he sayd no such thing: Ey but said hee, thou didst; but said the other, I did not: hee still urg'd it, and the other deny'd it so long, that at length he brake out, and sayd, thou lyest in thy throate, and in thy guts, to say that I offered to give thee the lye, at which word he flung away his cudgell, and sayd, that word hath given me satisfaction: It was well that thou didst not

say I ly'd, for if thou hadst, I would not have left beating thee whilst thou hadst had one whole bone in thy skinne.

To one that had two children at one birth, Will Summers came and told him, that hee had the most honest and faithfullest wife of any man that was in the whole parish, he demanding wherein? wherein saith hee? why she hath brought thee two children at once, and hath given them both unto thee; when, if she had not beene iust and honest, shee might have conceal'd the one of them. and kept it to her selfe.

His Father upon a time sent him unto the Horse-market with a Nagge to sell, now when hee came to the place where the chapmen resorted, and every one rid his horse to and fro, to make them the more credible, he tyed his horse in a corner, and sate him downe close by him: At length one

one spying the Nagge, and seeing him to be a very like beast, and thinking him to be the seller, because he sate so neare him, hee asked him what businesse hee had there? who answered, I cannot tell; hee asked him whose horse that was? hee answered, his that would buy him: sayd the other, Thou canst not sell him by sitting here; then (answered he) I will keepe him, and carry him away: hee asked him if he were sound of winde and limbe, sure if he were, reply'd hee againe, I thinke my Father is not such a foole as to part with him. The chapman perceiving his simplicity, imagined it to bee free from all deceit and cunning, bargained for him, and bought him.

Hee being easing his body, and eise at his businesse, one that knew him passing by, call'd to him, and sayd aloud, Well said Will, I see thou art doing that

which no man can do for thee: who answerd, I do not desire it, for I am old enough to doe it for my selfe: The other replyed, Indeed it is that which no body can be without; to whom (having made an end of what he was doing, & rising withall) he said, Nay that is not so, for I can be without it now, and if you like it you may take it for your labour.

His Father sending him into the Countrey upon some businesse, being benighted by the way, he light upon a Cottage, where by much intreaty he got shelter; but the house affording no spare bed, hee was forc't to make shift and lye in an out house, where was a Hay-loft: Now the man having a Cow that had newly calved, had laid it there for warmth sake, in which Will laid himselfe close by it, not perceiving that any such thing was there. In the night hee had a terrible dreame, for hee thought hee had a

great

great swelling in his belly, which troubled him very sore, and that in the end he was delivered of a Calfe; Now at the breake of day waking, and finding the young Calfe so neare him, presently apprehended that his dreame was true, and fearing lest it would come to light, he presently got up, and taking his supposed birth in his armes, cast it into a ditch, and drowned it, running away homeward as fast as his legges were able to carry him.

His Father not being well, sent him with his Urine to have some Counsaile from the Doctor, who knocking at his doore, and the Physitian opening unto him, hee presented him the Urinall, who, as he tooke it from his hand, asked him withal from whence he came: to whom he made answer, I hope your Worship is wise enough to finde that in the Water.

Being asked by one, why a dog, when

when he made water ſtill lifted up his legge: he anſwered, For manners ſake, and leſt hee ſhould bepiſſe his ſtockings.

Upon a time being where hee wanted a bed, and for neceſsities ſake, was forc'd to lye all the night on the bare boards, where he tooke very bad reſt, toſsing and tumbling from one ſide to another, by reaſon of his hard lodging; when rouſing himſelfe in the morning, & complaining of an ach in his bones, and caſting his eye downe upon the flowre, and ſpying a feather on the ground, on which he perceived hee had laine all that night; fetching a great ſigh, he ſaid: Now alas, how much doe I pitty rich men, what reſt can they take lying upon ſuch variety, and choyſe of feather-beds: when I having but one poore feather under me, have beene thus miſerably tormented.

Many and almoſt infinite were his

his Jests which past from him in the Countrey for stupid and simple, others witty and wise, insomuch, it could not be easily ghest to which his constitution was most inclined: but alwaies hee abhorred all nastinesse: keeping himselfe very handsome and cleanly; insomuch, that from the Countrey his fame spread as farre as the Court, and came to the eare of the King, who sent for him to see and talk with him.

Divers are the demeanours and dispositions of those which we call fooles and ideots; some are of a sullen and dogged nature, others of a merry and pleasant humour: one in rainy weather will bee full of sport and laughter: if you aske him why? he will tell you then, when the raine is over, there will come faire weather, and reioyce to thinke upon it: & when the raine is over, & faire weather comes, he will be sad and drooping; demand the cause

cause, that when ỹ faire weather is over, the soule will come againe: I have knowne another of such a contradictory spirit, that whatsoever you intreated him to doe, he would be dogged and deny it; but that you warn him to forbeare, ỹ he would do, though he were sure to be soundly disciplind for his paines; but this Will Summers was of an easie nature, & tractable disposition, who after he had found the fashions of the Court, and tride ỹ humour of the K. complide so well with both, that he gained not onely great grace and favour from his Majestie, but a generall love from the Nobility: for he was no carry-tale, nor whisperer, nor flattering insinuater, to breed discord and dissention, but an honest plaine downe-right, that would speake home without halting, & tell the truth of purpose to shame the divel, so that his plainnesse mixt with a kinde of facetiousnes, & tartnes with pleasantnes,

made

ade him very acceptable into the
mpanies of all men.

I told you he was sent for to the

Court; and comming up to London with his cloathes at his back, & passing through one of the Innes of Court,

Court in the height of the Terme, hee observed a great company of gentlemen in their gownes, and demanded of one that was with him, of what calling or profession they were, who told him they were Lawyers: Lawyers, saith he: indeede; for their sakes I am sorry for the whole City: Why: replyed the other, marry, saith he, because we have but one Lawyer in the shiere where I live, and he hath undone the whole Countrey; now they having so many here, I am greatly affraid, that in short space they will undoe the whole City.

Well to the Court hee was brought, and had admittance into the presence of the King, but what conference they had together, is beyond mee, in regard that I was not then present: and to discerne the King the better, he put on a paire of Spectacles; and being, asked the reason, said, Hee could

see

see every common man with his eyes, but to see the King he would put them on. But some say, that

hee asked him how many legges a Mutton had? who answered him two: againe he askt him, how hee could

could make that good: he replyed that he had heard in the Countrey, how a sheepe had foure legges, but being kild, and then call'd a mutton, it had onely two legges, and two shoulders. He next demanded of him, (he being a foole) whether he were capable to inherit any land? who answered him againe, that hee thought he might: The King demanded his reason? marry saith hee, my Father being a wise man, begat me a foole; now why may not I (being a foole) beget a wise childe to inherite my land, if I had any: with such and the like questions the King made tryall of him, and presently entertain'd him both into his grace and livery, and now who but Will Summers the Kings foole? who had got such an interest in him by reason of his quick & facetious Jests, that he could have admittance into his Majesties chamber, and have his eare, when a great noble man,

may,

nay, a priuy Counceller could not bee suffered to speake with him: and further, if the King were angry, or displeased with any thing if no man else durst demand the cause of his discontent, then was Will Summers prouided with one pleasant conceit or another, to take off the edge of his displeasure: but from the generall, I come to some particulars of his Iests, or merry conceits.

The King upon a time riding upon his progresse with his Nobles, and the Cardinall Wolsey, past by a place, where (it seemeth) hee had a Mistresse, which Will Summers well knew, the King being disposed to be merry, asked him if he could rime? Rime my Liege saith he? that I can, for I have in me much more Rime than Reason: Then replyed he againe, looke up towards that Turret, and answer to me in rime what I shall tell thee, and began thus:

Within yon Tower
There is a flower,
That hath my heart.

To whom Will Summers inſtantly reply'd,

Within this hower
She piſt full ſower,
And let a fart.

Which the King laughed at exceedingly; then the Cardinall would needs rime with him, & thinking thereby to have daunted him for his bold anſwer to the King, began, Come William, what ſay you to this Rime?

A rod in the ſchoole
And a whip for a foole,
Is alwayes in ſeaſon.

Then anſwered Will Summers,

A Halter and a Rope
For him that would be Pope
Againſt all right and reaſon.

Which the Cardinall hearing, bit his lip; for at that time there was ſome ſpeech that the Cardinall did aime at it. Theſe homely Jeſts might

might paſſe in thoſe dayes, though the refinedneſſe of theſe our times will neither admit ſuch courſneſſe of language, nor ſuch boldneſſe with Princes.

Nay, in thoſe times, as they were bold in their language, ſo oft-times they would not make it a thing ſqueamiſh, to bee ſomewhat prophane: for the Proverb being then on foot, That there were three ſeverall Trades that could never be free from Felony, namely, Weavers, Millers, and Taylers. The King asked his foole what he thought of Millers? Of Millers ſaith he? I will tell your Majeſty; I hold them to bee a kinne to the bleſſed Virgin: Your reaſon ſaith the King? marry anſwered he, I ſhall tell you; ſhe above all colours preferreth white veſture, as betokening purity, ſincerity, and chaſtity; and in that they alſo ſtrive to imitate her; for you ſhall never meete a Miller but in a white and mealy

millers.

habite: next, as she was before the birth a Virgin, in the birth a Virgin, and after the birth a Virgin: so a Miller is before his Mill a Theefe, in his Mill a Theefe, and behind his Mill a Theefe: but these words, though they be privileg'd for fooles, are not authenticall for wise men.

It was a custome in those dayes that no man should be admitted into the Kings guard, but such as were tall statur'd, well featur'd, strong men, and valiant. Now it happened, that some places being then empty, to fill up the number, divers Noble-men had preferr'd some of their servants, and presented them unto the King; (Will Summers then standing by) saith one of them, See my Liege, this man is no coward, for he hath received this hurt in his face: And saith another, and this my man hath had such and such cuts in the legge: saith the third, and mine

hath

hath had ſo many dangerous wounds in the body, and withall cauſed them to ſhew their skarres which were apparant; which the Prince obſerving, and as the Proverb goeth, King *Harry* lov'd a man, hee was willing to receive them into the band; but before hee would entertaine them, he asked Will Summers what he thought of theſe ſtout and tall fellows? who anſwered him againe, that hée thought them not fit for his ſervice: the King demanding his reaſon, marry ſaith he, I ſée theſe men have indéed béene hurt, and mangled, and have their mends in their owne hands: but I would have thée to ſend out, and make inquiry for the men that gave them theſe wounds; for in my minde, they of the two (if thou ſhouldſt ſtand in néed of them) are the fitteſt for thy ſervice.

One asking Will Summers why the beſt and richeſt Benefices were

for the most part, conferr'd on the most unworthy and unlearned men? he made answer, Doe not you observe dayly, that upon the most weake and poorest Jades are layd the greatest burdens, and upon the best and swiftest horses placed the youngest and lightest Gallants?

Upon a time passing by a very hard favour'd wench he said to one in his company, And is not that a very dainty fine creature? which the Lasse over-hearing and knowing she was flouted, made answer againe, Thou maist walke farre enough before thou shalt heare any one say so much by thee. Nay reply'd he, that I neede not, if any man be disposed to tell as lewd a lye of me, as I did of thée.

Will Summers comming into a Chappell of the Fryar Minors, hée saw Saint Francis painted in a very faire table, sitting in the midst of foure grave and reverend Doctors;

tors; who presently call'd to a Fryar, and demanded of him what Saint Francis, being a lay-man, and no Scholler at all, made in that place, disputing amongst the Doctors? The Fryar replyed unto him againe, why I tell thee thou ignorant fellow, that this Saint Francis was the greatest Doctor amongst them all: who answered, Me thinks that carrieth with it very small appearance, of truth, that the Fryar Minors, (which is the least Fryars, or the Fryars of the lesse order) should have the greatest Scholler or Doctor to be their Founder or Patron.

His custome was (by the Kings command) to keepe a Catalogue or a Register of all their names in or about the Court, who had committed any notorious folly, or ridiculous act worthy iust taxation or laughter, and once in a quarter of a yeere to bring unto the King a particular, or list of their names:

It so happened, that a traveller and stranger comming from beyond ỹ Seas, tickled the King in the head with divers Spanish Jennets, of which, if his Maiesty would furnish him with a certaine sum of money, he would not onely furnish his stables, but his whole Countrie (in short time) with their broode; and prevailed so far, that he had a 1000 pound paid him out of the Exchequer to that purpose, and so tooke his leave of the King: Some two Moneths after, being to deliver up his Register, his Maiesty found his owne name lysted amongst the rest of the fooles: at which being on the suddaine very angry, and asked him why hee durst be so sawcy, to ranke him in the number of the others ridiculous for their follies: Who answered him againe: Marry Harry I doe it not without good cause, (replide hee) for here came a stranger (no man knowes from whence) into thy Court,

Court, and hath made thee beleeve hee will bring thee horses over; but when canst thou tell? Now, wast not thou a very foole to trust a traveller, who was neither known unto thee, nor unto any of thy Subiects with so much money? to whom the King replyed; Ey, but what wilt thou say, if hee come over iust at the day appoynted, and bring me over so many Iennets as he promised? What will I say? (saith Will) marry Ile tell thee Harry; when I see this done, I will make no more adoe, but faire and flatly quite race out thy name, and put in his; and then hee, and not thee, shall stand a foole upon record.

In King Henry the eights dayes, there was great poasting to and fro for Roome: for the Cardinall Woolsey had much businesse with the Pope: Now the Cardinall had a naturall foole to make him merry, which was called Patch; which

Foole

Fool loved Wil Sūmers exceedingly; as you may behold him, saying welcome Couz, welcome Couz: but

Will Summers loved him onely for his owne ends; and being come to the Cardinals house, Patch the Car-

Cardinals foole, willing to give his consen Will entertainment at his Lords house, prevailed so farre with him, as to have him to the seller, which was the innermost or private seller, intending to drink some Wine, and for further love and courtesie, would broach a fresh Hogs-head of Wine for his Cousen; and having pierc't one or two Hogs heads, nothing came out, and yet was very heavy, went to another, and so tryde halfe a score; at length Will Summers with a Hammer that lay by, strikes the head of one of the Hogs-heads out, and there appeared nothing but Gold: Now Will Summers he saith nothing, but when he came to the Court, tels the King what a Seller of Wines hee had beene in at the Cardinalls; and that his seller yeelded no such Wines, or ere would: How, saies the King, have not I no such Wines in my Seller? no indeed, said Will, for there

is

is never a Hogs-head in the Car-
-dinals seiler, but is worth ten
thousand pounds, and better: No-

ther of God, sayes the King, that is
such Wine that I never heard
of; ten thousand pounds a Hogs-
head.

head: nay, rather more than lesse; Come Sirrah, saies the King, tell mee your meaning, for I know there is something else in it; tell me, or I will hang thee; then Will told the King how his cousen Patch, the Cardinals foole, brought him into his seller to drinke Wine, and broached two or three Hogs-heads, and no Wine came forth; so at length hee burst open the head of one of the Hogs-heads, and that was full of Gold, and so was the next to that, and forty more which hee saw; whereupon the King, having formerly taken a distaste at the Cardinall, presently sends Messengers and other officers to the Cardinals seller, and there findes 150 Hogs-heads of good gold, which was conveighed to the Exchequer, which money was welcome to the King, for at that time the King had great neede of it: Now the Cardinal hearing of this sad fortune, fell sicke at

After

Asher in Surry, and makes friends to the King to pacifie him, and withall he sent Patch his foole to be his servant; which Patch hearing, fell a crying, and would by no meanes have gone from him, till the Cardinall was forced to commaund five of his tallest Yeomen to to conduct him to the King, where they received him gladly: Then Will Summers shewed his new Couzen the Court, and divers other offices, which pleased Patch very well; and they both giving attendance.

The King at that time having an Embassie to send to Rome, asked Will whether he had a minde to goe on pilgrimage to Rome, as many of his Subiects frequently did? To whom he answered, that of all the places in the World, hee had no minde to travaile thither: the King demanded his reason why? hee made answer, marry Harry because the old Proverbe is new:

newly come into my minde, and that is this; The first time after that a man hath beene at Rome, and returned from thence, hee is thought to be a knave; the second time he is proved to be a knave; but the third time he is knowne to bee both a knave and an impostor.

Going over with the King to Bulleine, hee had compleat armour made for him, from head to foote; which is to bee seene within the Tower at London: And the weather being rough and tempestuous, hee never having beene on shipboord before, beganne to be very fearefull of the Sea, and calling for a peece of the saltest Beefe they had, beganne to eate it before the King very greedily; who asking him, why hee eate such grosse powdred meate with such an appetite, when there was such store of fresh victuals aboard: he made answer, O blame me not Harry to fill my stomacke

ſtomacke with ſo much ſalt meate before hand, knowing, if we be caſt away, what a deale of water I have to drinke after it.

One thing I had forgot which he ſpake to the King at his firſt entertainment, but better inſerted out of courſe, than altogether intermitted. His Maieſty after ſome diſcourſe growing into ſome good liking of him, ſaid, Fellow, wilt thou be my foole? who anſwered him againe, that hee had rather to bee his owne fathers ſtill, than his: the King asking him why? he told him againe, that his Father had got him a foole for himſelfe, (having but one wife) and no body could iuſtly claime him from him: now you having had ſo many wives, and ſtill living in hope to have more, why, of ſome one of them, cannot you get a foole as hee did? and ſo you ſhall be ſure to have a foole of your owne.

The King being in diſcourſe at Table

Table with ſome of his Lords, held an argument, that of all his people in the Kingdome, whether of the Nobility, Gentry, or City-merchants, or Tradeſmen, of what faculty or condition ſoever, he thought the Ruſtick or Countrey-man to be the moſt even and plaine dealing, as doing iuſtly and equally alike to all: To whom Will Summers (then ſtanding by) ſayd, that he was not of his minde: Why reaſon Will (ſayd the King) What be they that deale more fairely and proportionably? marry ſaith he, your Bath or hot houſe-kæpers; for they to young and old, poore and rich, that come within their charge, give equall heate and warmth to all alike, without either difference or the leaſt partiality.

Upon a time Theeves breaking into his Chamber, and he perceiving them, call'd out unto them, and ſaid, I wonder my maſters, what you hope to finde here in the

darke night worth your seeking, when I can see nothing in the cleare morning that is worth my keeping.

Another time lying in a Garret, hee might perceive a fellow that had raised a long ladder as high as his window, and was ready to open the casement, and come in; when he suddenly rising, came to the window, and said, my friend, thou commest too early, thy best is to stay alittle while, for I am not asleepe yet; which the Theefe hearing, through feare let goe his hold, and had almost broke his necke downe the Ladder.

Now Patch being at Court, every one had a great desire to talke with him, and would oftentimes give him Wine; and hee loved sweete wine exceedingly, and it was as naturall to him as milke for a Calfe; and having dranke somewhat too much, that his stomack would not beare it, and fearing

ring to be ſeene, leſt he ſhould have beene whipt at the Porters lodge, the better to conceale this overſight, runnes to a cloſe ſtoole, and opening the top, puts in his head, becauſe hee would not be heard to vomit; and when hee had eaſed his ſtomack, he could not get his head out of the ſeate: ſo at length he cryed out, and no body heard him for the preſent, and he not able to endure the ſmell, ſtrived to pull his head out, which he could not doe; but often forcing himſelfe, at length pulled the ſtoole out, which hung about his necke like a band; which ſome eſpying brought him before the King, and told the ſtory, which made the King laugh heartily at his folly.

In the time of the progreſſe Will Summers being billeted in an Inne, the Hoſt of the houſe tooke it as a great grace, that the Kings foole, or Jeſter, (whether you pleaſe to call him) would vouchſafe to

take up his lodging in his house, & when supper was brought up into the Chamber, the Host thinking

to collogue with him, (because he had that time a suite at the Court, in which he thought hee might doe him

him some pleasure) beganne to finde fault with one thing first, and then with another, saying, the Trenchers were not well scrapt, neither were the Napkings and linnen white and cleane enough for his Worship, and flung them downe the staires, and said he would fetch better: whose backe was no sooner turned, but Will Summers tooke the meate that was in the platters, dishes, pots, glasses, stooles and all, and flung them downe the staires after him; at which, the Host comming up in a great rage, asked him what in the Divels name hee meant by that? no hurt I assure you mine Host, replyed he; but I seeing you cast downe the Napkins and the trenchers before, I sent the meate and the dishes after, thinking your purpose was, wee should have supt below.

Will Summers at one time being angry with his Wife, and being

come from Court somewhat early, and it being Summer-time, had in his house a very fine Cat, it being a Sun-shine day, the Cat plaid with her shadow, and then with her taile, running round about with her tatle in her mouth, which Will Summers his wife seeing, fell a laughing; hee presently takes the Cat and knocks out her braines; and being asked the reason why he did so, made this answer, Because his wife should not learne of her.

Will Summers, before hee came to London, having gained a good report, and being well-beloved amongst gentlemen for his merry conceits, used to come to the Towne every tuesday, it being a Market day, and divers Gentlemen meeting together that day at an Ordinary, which was constantly kept there; Will Summers comming in, and hearing that the Hostesse of the house had a Kinswoman

man, which was held for a very witty lasse, and she likewise having a good opinion of her owne Mother wit; for her tongue was like a clocke, alwaies wagging, and she hearing that Will Summers was such a notable witty conceited fellow, tooke time and opportunity to let him understand, that she had as much in her head as ever was in her Grandfathers; yet in some things shee differed from the women in those dayes, for their naturall complexion was their beauty: now this Butterfly, what she wanted by Nature shee doth replenish by Art, as her bores of her white and red daily can testifie. But to come to the purpose, Will Summers being come into the Ordinary amongst the Gentlemen, throwes by his Cote, salutes the Gentlemen, and desires the Drawer to bring up a pinte of the best Charniko. Now Will Summers had a paire of hose on,

that for some offence durst not bee seene in that hue that they were first dy'd in, for they had changed their colour very much, and in that manner, that one part seemed blew, the other greene: The wench told him, that his breeches being of so many colours, well suited with his condition; and for the antiquity of them, that they might not be forgotten wished him to let them bee put in print, and she would beare the charges: At which words the company laughed, and jeered at Will Summers; and he being much moved in his minde, that his Hose were now called in question, and before his friends, and by a maids too, answered, By my faith Mistresse, said Will Summers, thy face is most damnable ill painted. How meane you, good William Winter, said shee? Marry thus, my Bartholmew faire Baby, that if it were not for printing and painting, my Arse

Arse would be forgotten, and thy face would want reperations. At which words, shee knowing her selfe guilty bit her lippe, and in a parret fury went downe the staires very hastily. The gentlemen laughed at the suddaine answer of Wil Summers: and now being dinner-time, and the meat upon the Table, the Gentlemen would needes have the company of this witty gentlewoman to dine with them; who being earnestly intreated came up, hoping ere dinner was done, to cry quittance with her friend William: and when they had placed her, they would needes have Will Summers sit next to her, because they did imagine they would have a fling one at another. Will Summers kindly entertaines her; and being sate together, and some time spent in eating and drinking, Will Summers having a minde to put a tricke upon her, desired

her

her to reach him the Capon that ſtood a little off her, and as ſhee roſe up, and putting out her arme and body to reach the diſh, William Summers ſitting next to her, yerkes out a huge fart, which made all the company in a maze, one looking upon the other, yet they knew it came that way. Peace Gentlemen, ſaid Will Summers, and whiſpered her in the eare, I will ſay it was I: All the company fell into a huge laughter, ſhe into a fretting fury, vowing ſhee ſhould never ſleepe quietly till ſhee was revenged of her Countrey-man Will, and ſo in a great chafe ſhee left their company.

Will Summers keeping his Fathers ſheepe in the Countrey, did uſe to carry a paire of Cards in his pocket, and meeting with boyes as good as himſelfe, would fall to cards at the Cambrian game of Whip-her-ginny, or Engliſh one

and

nd thirty; at which ſport he would ome dayes looſe a ſheepe or two: or which if his father corrected im, hee (in revenge) would rive the ſheepe home at night o- er a narrow bridge, where ſome of them falling beſides the bridge, were drowned in the ſwift brooke. The old man, his father, being wea- ried with his ungracious dealing, complayned to a Juſtice, thinking to affright him from doing any more the like. In briefe, before the Juſtice Will Summers was brought, where (uſing ſmall re- verence, and leſſe manners) the Juſtice ſaid to him, Sirrah, you are a notable villaine, you play at cards, and looſe your Fathers ſheepe at one and thirty. Will Sum- mers replyed, that it was a lye: A lye quoth the Juſtice, you ſaucy knave, doeſt thou give me the lye? No, quoth Will Summers, I gave not you the lye, but you told me the lye, for I never loſt ſheepe

at

at one and thirty, for when my game was one and thirty I always wonne. Indeed said the Justice, thou sayst true: but I have another accusation against thee, which is, that you drive your fathers sheepe over a narrow bridge, where some of them are oftentimes drowned: That's a lye too quoth Will Summers, for those that goe over the Bridge are well enough, it's onely those that fall beside, which are drowned: whereto the Justice sayd to Will Summers father, Old man, thou hast brought in two false accusations against thy sonne, for he never lost sheepe at one and thirty, nor were there ever any drowned that went over the bridge.

Upon a time Will Summers seeing a decayed Gentleman in a very thred-bare cloake, said to him, Sir you have a very watchfull cloake on: Why sayd the poore Gentleman?

man: the other answered, I doe not thinke it had a good nap this seven yeeres: the Gentleman replyed, and truely sir me thinkes you want a nap as well as my cloake, for you talke idely for want of sleepe.

Upon a festivall day Will Summers began to have a veine of mirth, and being in the Courtyard walking with divers Gentlemen, hee espyed a little Gentleman, being of a very low stature, and wore a broad brim'd Hat, which hee presently tells to one of his friends, saying, if that Gentleman had but such another Hat at his feete, he might be served up to the Kings Table as betweene two dishes.

The King tooke great delight in Will Summers, for hee could make such anticke faces, and so change his countenance as he listed;

sted; for when at any time the King was set at dinner, Will Summers would but put in his head and face betweene the hangings, in such a manner, that it would make the King laugh heartily, and then hee would come up to the Kings table in such a rolling and innocent posture, in holding his hands, and setting his eyes, that it is past describing, unlesse one saw them.

Infinite were the Jests and witty answers of this Will Summers, which would aske a longer Relation than this Tractate well affoords, sparing the rest for a second part, if this former be by the Courteous Reader well accepted, concluding with that which hee spake upon his death-bed.

When hee lay drawing neere unto his end, a Fryar, who was his

his ghostly father, comming to confesse him of his sins, he began to examine what estate hee had in

possession, and to whom his purpose was to leave it? To whom he made answer, that he had a matter

ter of some five hundred pound, which hee had gotten by the favour of the King, and that he meant to leave unto the Prince of the world. The covetous Fryar thinking to have perswaded him to have left it unto their covert, began to grow very angry, and said, and why dost thou not rather conferre it upon us who are mendicants, and needy? To whom hee againe replyed, because I meane to dye in your Doctrine: for you teach us, that all the goods & wealth of this earth belong to the Prince and Princes of this world, and therefore this my Action shall be according unto your Instruction.

An

An Epitaph upon the death of *Wil Summers*, Foole, or Iester to King *Henry* the Eight.

STay Traveller, gueſſe who lies here;
I tell thee, neither Lord nor Peere:
No Knight, no Gentleman of note,
That boaſts him of his ancient coate,
Which Heralds curiouſly emblazon,
For men (well skild therein) to gaze on:
Know then, that this was no ſuch man,
And I'le expreſſe him as I can.

He that beneath this Tomb-ſtone lies,
Some cal'd a *foole*, ſome held him *wiſe*:
For which, who better proofe can bring,
Than to be favoured by a King?
And yet againe we ma miſ-doubt him,
"A King hath alwaies *fooles* about him.

An Epitaph.

Is he more Ideot than the reſt,
Who in a guarded coat can jeſt?
Or can he wiſedomes honour gaine,
That is all bravery, and no braine?
Sure no ſuch thing, wit truely bred,
I'th Habite lies not, but the head.
But whether he was *foole* or *knave*,
He now lies ſleeping in his grave;
Who never in his life found match,
Vnleſſe the Cardinals *foole*, cald *Patch*:
Of whom, ſome Courtiers, who did ſee
Them two alone, might ſay, *We three*:
And t'may be fear'd, it is a phraiſe
That may be us'd ſtill in theſe daies.
Well more of him what ſhould I ſay?
Both *fooles* and *wiſe men* turne to clay:
And this is all we have to truſt,
That there's no difference in their duſt.
Reſt quiet then beneath this ſtone,
To whom late *Archer* was a drone.

Stultorum plena ſunt omnia.

Re-

Remarkable paſſages in King *Henry* the Eights time, which *Will Summers* tooke notice of.

AND the firſt was of that ſtout Pirat Andrew Barton, a Scottiſh Gentleman; which the King hearing of, being in his progreſſe at Leiceſter, and withall knowing what ſpoyle he had done, having robbed every Nation, and ſtopped the Kings ſtreames, that no Merchant, almoſt, could paſſe without a ſtrong Convoy: and at that time the King of Scots had Warre with the Portugals, and under that pretence, when hee tooke our Engliſh Merchants ſhips and goods, hee bare them in hand that they were Portugals goods; and thus he robbed at every Havens mouth. The King

displeased herewith, sent Sir Edward Howard, the Lord high Admirall of England; the Lord Thomas Howard, Sonne and Heire to the Earle of Surrey, and Iohn Hopton to the Sea, which made ready two ships, and being at sea, by chance of foule weather and a suddaine come were separated: The Lord Howard lying in the Downes, and hearing that Andrew Barton was within a few leagues, and that he was making towards Scotland, having the opportunity of a good winde, hoysed his sayles, and chased him so hard, that hee overtooke him: so there was a sore and terrible fight betwixt them. Andrew Barton continually blew his whistle to encourage his men, but at length the Lord Howard and his company did so valiantly and so fiercely continue, that by cleare strength they entred the maine decke: The Scots fought very valiantly upon the hatches; but

but in the concluſion Andrew Barton was taken, and ſo ſore wounded by the ſplinters of the ſhip, which a bullet made, that he dyed there in the preſence of the Lord Howard, and the remnant of the Scots were taken with their ſhip, called the Lyon. Thus was this ſhip, and the other ſhip which did accompany her, brought to Blackwall the ſecond of Auguſt, 1520. And thoſe that were taken priſoners, were ſent guarded to London, where they were kept as priſoners in the Archbiſhop of Yorkes Palace, now called White-Hall; and then after a while, were ſent into Scocland, and there received condigne puniſhment as Law required.

The yeere following dyed this Thomas Lord Howard, and was honourably interred at Thatford, and then after at Fremingham, where his body reſted, being firſt imbalmed, and then wrapped in

Lead. Also about that time deceased Sir Thomas Lovell, Knight of the Garter, at his house at Endfield, and was buried at Holywell, an house of Nunnes besides London; now made an Hospitall for diseased people; unto which House he had beene a great Benefactor, not onely in building of a beautifull Chappell, wherein his body was interred, but in many other goodly buildings, and endowed the same with Lands.

The first of September the yeere following, there was an Embassador sent from Clement the seventh, being then Pope, which brought with him divers presents but amongst them this was one which was taken notice of, and generally commended of all men which beheld it, and that was a Rose of pure Gold presented to the King at his Manor at Windsor. The tree whereon the Rose did seems to grow, was also forged

ged of fine Gold, and wrought with branches, leaves, and flowers inamiled, which resembled naturall Roses set in a pot of gold, which pot had three feete, and supported by three severall Antickes: And in the uppermost and largest Rose was a faire Saphyre lowe pierced, the bignesse of an Acorne; the Tree it selfe was of height halfe an English yard, and in breadth a foote.

In this yeere 1527, King Henry following his Hawke, lept over a ditch besides the hedging, with a pole, which pole when he was upon his rise brake in sunder, so that if one of his Foot-men had not lept into the water, and lift up his head which was fast in the mud, hee had there surely beene drowned, or stifled.

Likewise in the same yeere, and in the Moneths of November, December, and January fell such raine, that thereof ensued great floods,

which destroyed Corne-fields, pastures, and abundance of cattell, and other beasts; and then was it dry till the twelfth of Aprill, and from that time it rained every day and night till the third of Iune the yeere following, whereby corne and other graine failed much in the ensuing yeere; that it was sold at sixteene shillings the bushell; such scarcity of bread was in London, and in all England, that many dyed for want thereof: The King hearing of this great want, sent of goodnesse to the City of London, of his owne provision 600 Quarters, or else for one weeke there had been little bread. The Carts that were appointed for bringing in of this corne from Stratford towards London, were met by the vulgar sort at Mile-end, so that the Lord Maior and Sheriffes were forced to goe and rescue the same Carts, and provison, and to see them brought to the

Mar-

Markets appointed, and there to be ſold, and equally diſtributed according to every ones neceſſity: And ſhortly after the Merchants of ỳ Still yard in Thames ſtreet, brought and procured from Dansk ſuch ſtore of Wheate and Rye, that the ſame was ſold better cheape in London, than in any other parts of the Kingdome of England beſides.

In the yeere 1530. William Tindall having by good aſſiſtance and command tranſlated the New Teſtament into Engliſh, and cauſed the ſame to bee printed beyond the Sea, and by his Nephew Peter Okes, then a Merchants Factor being there reſident, many of them were conveyed into England among other Merchants goods, and there were made ſale of as good merchandize; for many Proteſtans deſired to have them, but this Tranſlation was forbidden by the King to be uſed by his ſubiects. In

In the yeare 1533, and in the moneth of April, one Richard Rosse, a Cooke, was boyled in a Caldron of Water in the middle of West Smithfield, for poysoning of divers persons, to the number of fifteene, at the Bishop of Rochesters place: amongst the which Benet Curwin, a gentleman of the Bishops was one; and the said Cooke being full of malice and envy, intended to have poysoned the Bishop himselfe; but he eate no broth that day, whereby he escaped: many of the poore people which stood at the Bishops gate for relefe, eate of these pottage, & many of them dyed the same day.

In this yeare, King Henry took into his hands the Hospitall of St. Iames, neare unto Charing-crosse, and all the meadowes belonging to the same, compounding with the Sisters of that house; and they to have pensions during their

their lives; and then builded in the place of the said Hospitall a goodly mansion, retaining still the name of St. James: he also inclosed a parke, with a wall of bricks, now indifferently serving to the said mansion, as also to his Palace of White-hall.

In the yeare following it was enacted by good advise and authority, that all Butchers whatsoever, should sell their beefe and mutton by weight: Beefe for a halfe penny the pound, and Mutton for three farthings; which being devised for the great commodity of the Realme (as it was thought) hath proved for otherwise: for at that time fat Oxen were sold for five and twenty shillings and eight pence the peece; fat Weathers for three shillings and foure pence the peece; fat Calves for the like value; and a fat Lamb for twelve-pence.

The

The Butchers of London sold penny-peeces of Beefe for the reliefe of the poore, every peece weighed two pound and a halfe; sometimes three pound for a penny; and thirteene, and sometime fourteene of these peeces for twelve pence: Mutton eight pence the quarter, and an hundred weight of Beefe for foure shillings and eight pence: what price it hath growne to since, and beares now, I need not set down: At this time also, and not before, were forraine butchers permitted to sell their flesh in Leaden-hall Market in London.

In this yeere was Queene Elizabeth borne at Greenewich, on the seventh day of September, being Sunday; and was Christened on the Wednesday following in a most stately manner: the King caused a Font of Silver to be made of purpose for her Christning.

About

About the yeere following, in the sixteenth day of August, the Kings stables at Charing-crosse were by a negligent servant set on fire by a Candle: of old time it was called the Mewes, for that the Hawkes were there mewed, and kept; wherein were burned many great houses, and great store of Hay and Oates.

The twentieth of March following, a Parliament being assembled, George Feres Burgesse for the Towne of Plimmouth was arrested in London upon an Execution; which the Lower house of Parliament hearing of, sent forth with the Seriant at Armes to the Counter, then being in Bred-streete to fetch him out but the Clerkes and other Officers of the Shrieves. would not deliver him, till the Shrieves came themselves, who after satisfaction given delivered him: howbeit, this matter was so taken in the

Common-

Common-house, that ye Shrieves, Clerkes, and five of their Officers, with the party plaintiffe, were sent to the Tower, and were afterward delivered by the speaker and common-house, and withall had a great checke; the Shrieves were delivered from all charges, except twenty pounds for their fees, and the losse of their upper garment, which is the gentleman Porters fees.

The third of August, at Middleton, abount eleven miles from Oxford, a woman brought forth a child, which had two perfect bodies, from the Navill upwards, & were so ioyned together at the navill, that when they were laid in length, the one head and body was Eastward, & the other West, the legges for both the bodies grew out at the midst where the bodies ioyned, & had but one issue for the excrements of both bodies: they lived 18 dayes; they were of the female sex.

FINIS.